

**FAQ Based on
Questions Gathered from Attendees at
August 24, 2010 Statewide School Reform
Technical Assistance Meeting**

- 1. Please give specific examples of local school district adopted transformation that resulted in dramatic improvement.**
- 2. Please give an example of a school which used and succeeded with the turnaround model.**

Access the following websites to review videos or research articles about specific schools that have engaged in school restructuring using a variety of models including the turnaround model and demonstrating rapid, significant improvement.

<http://www.ed.gov/blog/2010/03/whats-possible-turning-around-americas-lowest-achieving-schools/>

<http://www.centerii.org/WhatAreDistrictsDoing/>

<http://dww.ed.gov/> (Doing What Works)

http://www.learningpt.org/pdfs/School_Restructuring_Guide.pdf

- 3. Superintendent Flanagan said he added the rank order (Top to Bottom) list; that it was not required. Yet a PowerPoint said it was state and federally required. Which is accurate?**

Publishing a Top to Bottom list was neither a state nor a federal requirement. It was a federal requirement to develop a ranking system and identify the persistently lowest achieving (PLA) schools according to certain specifications and it was a state requirement to publish the list and the formula. Publishing the ranking for all schools was the Superintendent's and Department's choice.

However, the PLA list was created from two non-overlapping pools of schools in accordance with federal requirements. The federal requirements for creating the PLA list also indicated that the two non-overlapping pools be compared to each other. In order to do so, a statewide top to bottom ranking had to be created. Had the Top to Bottom list not been published by MDE, it surely would have been obtained through a FOIA request.

Finally, the Top to Bottom listing gives schools a preview of the new Michigan School Accreditation and Accountability System (MI-SAAS) that will be based on the same methodology as the PLA and Top to Bottom lists.

4. a.) Are there any schools from districts not eligible for Title I ranked below PLA schools?

No. Of the 22 local school districts not eligible for Title I, most were small school districts and public school academies that tested fewer than 30 students. Some were public school academies open for less than a year, and the four public school academies that had substantial student populations had percentile rankings of 53, 81, 91, and 93.

b.) Are there schools that are not eligible to be placed on the PLA list?

Yes. Schools that receive Title I funds and that are making adequate yearly progress (AYP) are not placed in the pool of schools to be ranked. Small schools (testing fewer than 30 students) also are not placed in the pool of schools to be ranked.

5. Is the state using only one grade to identify any PLA schools?

Yes. High schools are generally identified based on grade 11 test scores unless they also instruct students in 7th grade or below. There also are some grade configurations of elementary/middle schools that result in only one grade of data being attributable to a school. For example, a 7/8 school only has grade 8 MEAP scores (following up on 7th grade instruction) that are attributable to the school. However, because of the restriction of calculating a ranking only for schools with at least 30 full academic year students in both reading and math in the two most recent years, school rankings are calculated on the basis of a minimum of 60 students' data regardless of how many grades are included for any given school.

6. Is the State Reform Officer personally going to be reading/ reviewing and approving the redesign plans, or will it be your staff/committee as SRRO for the 92 schools on the PLA list?

While not the sole reviewer for all redesign plans, the State Reform Officer will read all intervention plans and determine status of the application (approval/disapproval/changes required). The separate School Improvement Grant (SIG) process will involve teams of reviewers as is the standard with competitive grants within MDE. While all intervention plans may be approvable, not all SIG applications will be fundable.

7. What is the chance that the Office of Field Services (OFS) consultants may begin to allow professional learning communities (PLC) to be funded under federal Title costs?

Professional development costs associated with PLCs may be funded with Title I, Part A funds in school-wide schools. This includes facilitator fees, supplies/materials and substitute teachers or stipends.

Title II, Part A funds may be used to pay for supplies/materials and substitutes or stipends for PLCs as long as the facilitator is paid with IIA funds, or IIA was used to train the facilitator on the PLC topic, or how to facilitate PLCs, in the past.

OFS has recently revised Title II guidance by issuing FAQs. These may be found at www.michigan.gov/ofc under Current Topics. Further clarification can be obtained by contacting your field service consultant or the office at 517-373-3921.

8. Do the Statewide School Reform and Redesign Office (SSRRO)/School Improvement Grant (SIG) Plans supersede the plans that are to be submitted because of the Title I AYP status?

There should be only one plan for each school. This plan should meet all requirements (Title I schoolwide, SIG, SSRRO, and other planning requirements) appropriate and consistent with the school's status. The single plan should be based on the comprehensive needs assessment, and be well-aligned and highly focused so that it can be implemented with fidelity quickly. Multiple or inconsistent plans lead to conflicts and distractions that inhibit implementation and progress on student achievement.

9. Small districts with only one high school cannot dismiss (or reassign) 50% of staff without terminating employment. Therefore, is the turnaround model not even an option they can consider?

Each district and school must select the model that works for its unique situation including needs of the students, staff, and the particulars of the collective bargaining agreements.

10. Why is it that a school that is no longer on "the list," is still eligible to receive funding? Shouldn't those funds be reallocated to districts in greater need that are still on the list (or were added for the first time to the SSRRO list)?

The original PLA list was published in accordance with the state's SIG application. The SIG was awarded to Michigan to run a competitive grant process during the 2009-10 school year with implementation beginning on September 7, 2010. The schools identified at that time were eligible to apply for the grant. The schools currently on the list are eligible to apply for round two of the SIG.

11. a.) Do schools that were identified in the second round and were identified as Tier 2 (and Title I) still considered Tier 2?

Yes.

b.) If they remain in Tier 2, do they still get Statewide System of Support (SSOS) services?

Tier 2 schools would still receive SSOS support if they are NOT funded by the SIG. If they receive SIG funding we anticipate that the schools would not get SSOS support next year but could purchase services from the SSOS vendor(s). They would still receive support this year.

12. a.) Please describe some of the metrics the Department will use to determine who gets SIG money, how much, etc.

Here is a link to the scoring rubric. The rubric begins on page 42.

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/1Michigan_SIG_Application_Final_02_05_10_310464_7.pdf

b.) What were the web sites to get data about schools and rankings?

Top to Bottom and PLA list:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Top_to_Bottom_and_PLA_lists_330492_7.xls

School District look-up:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/District_Lookup_330493_7.xls

Individual School look-up:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Individual_School_Lookup_330494_7.xls

13. Does summer school count for the additional 200-300 hours?

As taken from federal SIG guidance, summer school may count if it meets the following:

A-31. What is the definition of “increased learning time”?

“Increased learning time” means using a longer school day, week, or year schedule to significantly increase the total number of school hours to include additional time for (a) instruction in core academic subjects including English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography; (b) instruction in other subjects and enrichment activities that contribute to a well-rounded education, including, for example, physical

education, service learning, and experiential and work-based learning opportunities that are provided by partnering, as appropriate, with other organizations; and (c) teachers to collaborate, plan, and engage in professional development within and across grades and subjects.

A-32. Does the definition of “increased learning time” include before- or after-school instructional programs?

Research supports the effectiveness of well-designed programs that expand learning time by a minimum of 300 hours per school year. (See Frazier, Julie A.; Morrison, Frederick J. “The Influence of Extended-year Schooling on Growth of Achievement and Perceived Competence in Early Elementary School.” *Child Development*. Vol. 69 (2), April 1998, pp.495-497 and research done by Mass2020.) Extending learning into before- and after-school hours can be difficult to implement effectively, but is permissible under this definition, although the Department (USED) encourages LEAs to closely integrate and coordinate academic work between in school and out of school. To satisfy the requirements in Section I.A.2(a)(1)(viii) of the turnaround model and Section I.A.2(d)(3)(i)(A) of the transformation model for providing increased learning time, a before- or after-school instructional program must be available to all students in the school.

Addendum: Although research supports the effectiveness of increasing learning time by a minimum of 300 hours, the final requirements do not require that an LEA implementing either the turnaround model or the transformation model necessarily provide at least 300 hours of increased learning time. An LEA has the flexibility to determine precisely how to meet the requirement to establish schedules that provide increased learning time, and should do so with an eye toward the goal of increasing learning time enough to have a meaningful impact on the academic program in which the model is being implemented.

14. You said you are looking at growth; but not just state tests, but you are looking at proficiency and that would be a state test!

There is no consistent, statewide comparison that can be used in all schools except the statewide annual assessment. The statewide assessment always will be part of a school’s measure of academic success. For PLA schools to demonstrate progress, other measures will be agreed upon and evaluated. Such measures could include local assessments and norm-referenced assessments, student discipline data, Advanced Placement tests, college credit earning courses, and other measures of student and school achievement.

15. How do we get our school off the PLA list?

There are consequences for schools that are identified, such as parents choosing to send their children to other schools, which further exacerbate the funding problems many districts are facing. MDE recognizes that raising student achievement is complicated and hard work. Schools are working hard to accomplish this. Given the consequences, and that schools are working hard, the focus remains on all students achieving at high levels. MDE is committed to supporting schools so that all students will be successful in their preK-12 learning and prepared for postsecondary work and learning.

16. Are the SIG funded schools required to submit an intervention plan to SSRRO on November 16th even though they received funding?

Schools that were chosen to receive a SIG grant, that are still on the PLA list, should submit a letter from the district superintendent/PSA administrator and board president to the SSRRO stating that the SIG plan is the school's redesign plan. If the plan requires any amendments of the collective bargaining agreements, copies of the amendment(s) should be submitted with the letter. If schools chosen to receive a SIG grant are no longer on the PLA list, they do not need to submit information to the SSRRO.

17. Are there resources to help us choose the right people for the intervention team?

The Center for Innovation and Improvement webinars can be accessed for technical assistance with work on intervention planning and staff selection.

Selecting the Intervention Model	Webinar (46.07)	Power Point Slides (ppt)
Transformation Model	Webinar (31.04)	Power Point Slides (ppt)
Turnaround Model	Webinar (35.17)	Power Point Slides (ppt)
Restart Model	Webinar (35.34)	Power Point Slides (ppt)
Closure Model	Webinar (22.04)	Power Point Slides (ppt)
Communicating about School Reform	Webinar (37.45)	Power Point Slides with Notes (ppt)
The Right People for the Job	Webinar (43.20)	Power Point Slides with Notes (ppt)